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The Good Times Page

Edited by Joie Davidow

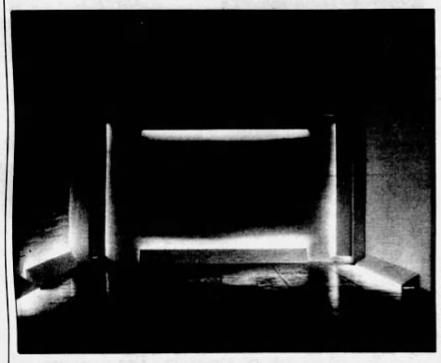

photo by J. Felgar

Barry Fahr's "Concealed Light" at the Traction Gallery downtown

In The Heart Of The Cultural Sunbelt

Who can doubt that L.A. has become an international art mecca, really, the cultural sun in a solar system of Philistines? In one week alone, the week that faces us now, we have available performances and films that truly defy description . . . but we'll try. Warming up on Saturday night, May 16, you can be witness to the Pasadena-based group Le Forte Four, as they present "The Men in the Ruby Red Suits," a musical interpretation of the life of Mercedes McCambridge, with film highlights. This quintet off-shoot of the off-beat L.A. Free Music Society will be followed by another of Pasadena's notorious, Ø Tela Conversion, as they present "Cha Cha Cha," which is, according to the press release, "a thrilling social guidance film with altered soundtrack." Of course, we've got to keep in mind that this is Pasadena's idea of a good time. Sunday, May 17, if you've a penchant for the musical spectrum challenging the "usual sound capabilities of viola, cello and voice," you might want to visit Fat and Fucked Up. The F and F-U trio includes painter Josie Rosh on viola and vocals, Guatemalan singer Vetza on cello and vocals, and video artist Michael Intriere on cello. David Hughes, coordinator of the action, will perform the cult classic "Dancing Ban in China" and a new live tape work "Epicanthic Fold." All this takes place in an environment of "Concealed Light" by Barry Fahr and "Time Environments," a sound installation by David Ocker. Both performances begin at 8 p.m. at the Traction Gallery, 800 Traction Ave.; $4; reservations required. Call 680-4743.

If you find yourself getting bored between Saturday and Sunday, none other than the scatalogical food critic of *Stuff* magazine, Richard Meltzer, will stew "readings, utterances and excretions" on Saturday night, May 16, at 3 a.m. at the *tres exclusif* Zero Zero Club, 1955 North Cahuenga Blvd. Call 668-2520.

And just as you thought you didn't need to go back in the water, *Men Who Are Men*, a constructivist drama by artist-filmmakers Jeff Balsmeyer and Kirby Dick, will be screened. Filmed on Santa Lucia in the Caribbean, this is a fictionalized documentary about a simulated jungle community of only black men. It will be accompanied by Luis Bunuel's surrealist documentary *Man Without Bread* (1932). Both may be seen May 19 and May 26, 8:30 p.m., at the Pan Andreas Theater, 8325 Santa Monica Blvd. Call Patti Podesta at the Long Beach Museum of Art, 439-2119.

—Hunter Drohojowska

Forum on El Salvador

"The Conflict in El Salvador," a public forum examining the full scope of U.S. involvement in that country and the history of the crisis, will feature three speakers representing different positions on this controversial issue. Participants include Dr. Blase Bonpane, professor at Cal State Northridge, representing CISPES (the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador); David Pierce, career foreign service officer in the U.S. State Department; and Mike Lee, president of the Lawyer's Guild. CED, in conjunction with the Social Action Committee of Emerson, is sponsoring the event. Emerson Unitarian Church, 7304 Jordan Ave., Canoga Park (near Topanga and Sherman Way); Fri., May 15, 8 p.m.; free, and child care will be provided. Call 761-7623.

—Ann Edelman

Raices de Nuestra Musica

What might be considered this year's ultimate *salsa* concert-dance is taking place at the Los Angeles Sports Arena on Saturday, May 16, at 8 p.m. *Raices de Nuestra Musica* (Roots of Our Music) Part Two, headlines Celia Cruz. Known for many years as Cuba's Queen of Rhythm, Celia is perhaps one of the finest salsa singers in the country, and her throaty, robust Afro-Cuban vocal style has been exciting audiences everywhere for over 30 years. This is one super bad lady, fully aware of her roots, and able to enchant both the younger and older generations.

Co-starring is Tito Puente, the dynamic and durable New Yorican (New York born Puerto Rican) timbales player and his exciting big band. Tito was called "El Rey de Timbal" (The King of the Timbales) back in the mambo era that he helped to popularize with his fiery timbales solos and jazzy big band arrangements. His sound influenced almost everyone on the Latin scene, and one of his compositions, "Oye Como Va," became a rock and roll smash when it was recorded by Santana. Puente's band has always been an important style setter and the breeding ground for many artists. Two graduates of the Puente band are featured in this show.

Conga drummer Ray Barretto, a genuine salsa superstar as a band leader and recording artist, will be a special guest soloist with his old boss. Barretto is something of a Latino cult hero in New York. After years as one of the leading salsa band leaders, Barretto left the Latin scene to lead a fusion style group. Disappointed with the lukewarm reception of his new group and recovering from a hand injury, he re-entered the salsa field with a new band and a fine LP called *Rican Struction*.

Willie Bobo

Also featured is timbales player-percussionist Willie Bobo, who was once Puente's bongo drummer and is considered one of the architects of contemporary Latin jazz. Willie's band will serve up their brand of Latin fusion. Bobo also served some important years with Cal Tjader, a special guest artist. Tjader, also one of the founding fathers of the Latin-Jazz movement, brings his lyrical vibraphone playing to this event. Cal won a grammy this year for best Latin LP. Many of his earlier albums, including some featuring Willie Bobo, are required listening for serious Latin-jazz aficionados, musicians and listeners alike.

Rounding out the evening are the rhythms of Orquesta Broadway, one of New York's most enduring *charanga* groups. The charanga sound of flute, piano, bass, conga, timbales, voices and a chorus of rhythmic violins is originally from Cuba, and is a favorite style of salsa among the many Cubanos living here. Pete "El Conde" Rodriguez is a first-class *sonero* (lead singer and improviser), and a master of the different rhythms and styles. El Chicano, one of the best of the Latin Rock groups, will also perform.

Wear some comfortable dancing shoes and dress sharp — you will undoubtedly succumb to the pulsating rhythms. This evening offers a great cross-section of styles to dance or listen to. Those who like any kind of salsa or Latin jazz should hear something to make them want to move their hips.

—Bobby Matos

***Raices de Nuestra Musica, Part 2**, Los Angeles Sports Arena, 3939 Figueroa; Sat., May 16, 8 p.m. Call 389-9339.*

Abortion Rights Activities

The California Abortion Rights Action League, one of the most vocal activist organizations opposed to the criminalization of abortion, is sponsoring a weekend of workshops as part of its fourth annual membership meeting. Workshops scheduled include "Grassroots Organizing," "Lobbying," and "Introduction to Public Speaking." Forbes Hall, Unitarian Community Church, 18th and Arizona, Santa Monica; Sat., May 16, 9:45 a.m.-5 p.m. $10 covers activities and lunch, and it is necessary to register in advance. Call 475-4619.

—Bobbi Clark

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